

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GABORO 00872 300144Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 ARA-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 /104 W
-----032077 301125Z /11

R 291116Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1893
INFO AMCONSUL CAPETOWN
AMEMBASSY DARESSALAAM
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 0872

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV RH SF BC CH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: PRC AMBASSADOR EXPRESSES FEAR OF CUBAN
INTERVENTION

1. AT A SOCIAL FUNCTION MARCH 24, PRC AMBASSADOR CHAO
CHENG-YI PULLED DCM ASIDE TO ASK HIM ABOUT DARESSALAAM
FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS' CONFERENCE WHICH HAD JUST BEEN ANNOUNCED
FOR MARCH 25-26. HE SAID HE VERY MUCH HOPED THAT SOMETHING
POSITIVE WOULD COME FROM IT, THAT TIME WAS RUNNING OUT AND
THAT "SOMETHING MUST BE DONE SOON OR OTHER FORCES WILL
INTERVENE". HE HAD HEARD THAT AMBASSADOR YOUNG WOULD ALSO
BE IN DAR, AND URGED USG TO SEE TO IT THAT THE MEETING
PRODUCED RESULTS. "YOU CAN DO IT", HE SAID,
"YOU HAVE THE POWER." (IT WAS UNCLEAR WHETHER HE
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PAGE 02 GABORO 00872 300144Z

MEANT TO GET SMITH OR PF TO BE FLEXIBLE; PROBABLY HE
MEANT BOTH.)

2. DURING CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ' MARCH 27 TRIP TO
GABORONE, THE CONGRESSMAN HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK
WITH AMBASSADOR CHAO AT THE AIRPORT DEPARTURE LOUNGE.
HE ASKED HIM INTER ALIA WHAT PRC ATTITUDE WOULD BE IN

THE EVENT OF CUBAN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN RHODESIA. CHAO ASKED IF THAT WERE VERY LIKELY TO HAPPEN, TO WHICH THE CONGRESSMAN REPLIED "NOT VERY LIKELY, BUT POSSIBLE". VISIBLY REASSURED, CHAO SAID HE CERTAINLY HOPED IT WOULD NOT OCCUR, AS CUBAN INTERVENTION WOULD VASTLY COMPLICATE AN ALREADY COMPLEX SITUATION. CHAO ADDED THAT HE BELIEVED THE FRONT LINE STATES WOULD NOT WANT CUBAN TROOPS IN RHODESIA AND WOULD OPPOSE ANY SUCH MOVE.

3. COMMENT. THE ABOVE EXPRESSION OF OPTIMISM (OR WISHFUL THINKING) MAY BE AN ERROR OF JUDGMENT BY CHAO, IN LIGHT OF EXTAFF MIN MOGWE'S REMARK EARLIER THAT DAY TO EFFECT THAT GOB WOULD NOT OPPOSE CUBAN INTERVENTION IF SOUTH AFRICA WENT INTO RHODESIA OR IF IT BECAME APPARENT THAT THERE WAS NO OTHER WAY TO BRING DOWN THE SALISBURY (I.E., SMITH) REGIME. NORLAND

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